



**Puya Gerami**  
**Director of Recovery for All, Resident of New Haven**

**Education Committee**  
**SB 1096: An Act Concerning the Charter School Approval Process (Oppose)**  
**HB 6763: An Act Concerning an Audit of the State-Wide Mastery Examination (Support)**  
**SB 1093: An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee Concerning Education (Support)**  
**March 1, 2023**

Good afternoon Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and distinguished members of the Education Committee.

My name is Puya Gerami. I live in New Haven. I'm a proud alumnus of the Connecticut public school system.

I serve as director of Recovery For All—a statewide coalition bringing together more than 60 community, faith, and labor organizations across Connecticut. We represent hundreds of thousands of residents from all walks of life. All our organizations stand united around a vision of rebuilding a better Connecticut where our state's extreme racial, economic, and gender inequities are eliminated and all our residents have a chance to thrive.

I'm submitting this testimony on behalf of Recovery For All regarding three bills.

First, we urge you to support HB 6763. This bill will empower our educators to “teach beyond the test” and create assessments that are appropriate for our students. For many years, the flawed focus on over-testing has undermined education for our students.

Second, we urge you to support SB 1093 to ensure that all our students will benefit from smaller class sizes. In classrooms across Connecticut, especially our multiracial working-class cities and towns, the combination of rising class sizes and staffing shortages have harmed our educational environment. Let's be clear: smaller class sizes will dramatically improve the learning conditions for our kids and the working conditions for our teachers and staff. All kids across Connecticut deserve these conditions to reach their full potential.

While some have asked whether the bold step of reducing class sizes is feasible due to lack of funding, we must remember that we are the wealthiest state in the world's wealthiest country. We absolutely have the resources to guarantee public education of the highest quality to every student—no matter where they live, what they look like, or how much money they make. Through a strong, equitable revenue stream, we can fund the future of our kids for years to come.

by requiring our wealthy corporations and residents to contribute more of what they owe to public education in our communities.

Finally, we urge you to oppose SB 1096. We are concerned that this bill will undermine democratic oversight of the approval and funding for new charter schools. Without transparency and accountability for charter schools, we can't ensure real equity for our kids. Instead of taking funds out of our schools to fast-track the creation of new charter schools, the legislature should fully fund and staff our public schools!

Fully funding our preK-12 public schools is one of the key pathways toward finally reducing the extreme racial, economic, and gender inequities in Connecticut.

Thank you.